

MEMORY PLAY ASSIGNMENT



WARM-UP

- Choose a memory of one of the following topics:
 - A happy event
 - A traumatic event
 - A “panoramic” account of a particular time (e.g., 3rd grade, last summer)
 - A return to a favorite place of your childhood
 - A weekend afternoon spent with family members
 - An intense conversation with a parent
 - The first encounter you had with someone you used to know
- Close your eyes and call up the memory.
- Open your eyes and record, in free-style writing, specifics from your memory based on the “scan” we just did and from any other aspect in your recall.

TERMS

- Although they can be structured differently, memory plays usually begin with a recollection, a monologue delivered by the main character. The protagonist remembers an important moment in his or her life, and then the story of the past unfolds on stage.
- In some memory plays, the narrator/protagonist comments throughout the play. (Think of the adult Ralphie in *A Christmas Story* or Kevin in the television series *The Wonder Years*).
- In other memory plays, such as the Tennessee Williams classic *The Glass Menagerie*, the protagonist narrates at the beginning, becomes a fully involved character during the bulk of the play, and then segues back to the back to the role of the narrator to offer final reflections about his memory.

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINE

- You will write only ONE ACT. Your plot will therefore need to be something small. Narrow your memory to a specific instance if needed.
- Begin with a paragraph or two describing how the “stage” is set up. What is the scenery? What props are needed? How do you want the lighting? Any costume requirements?
- Write the rest (the plot) in the style of a play (speaker, dialogue, action in italics)
- Begin the act with a narrator (protagonist) who speaks directly to the audience and begins to “remember” the memory itself. The narrator then joins the action of the plot.
- You can decide if you want the narrator to “break” and comment to the audience throughout the play OR to segue back into the role of narrator at the end of the play.
- Feel free to fictionalize to protect yourself or others in the memory– or even if you just want to make the story more interesting!
- Stop occasionally while you’re writing (esp. if you’re writing alone) to see how the dialogue sounds. Aim for **artistic realism**. That means you want the people to sound like real people, not caricatures-- but without being as boring as real people when they talk!
- The timeline
 - A DAY has the rest of class today, most of class on Friday 12/7, and the last 30-40 minutes of class Thursday 12/13 (in the library).
DUE: END OF CLASS THURSDAY, DEC. 13
 - B DAY has the rest of class today, most of class on Wednesday 12/12, and the last 30-40 minutes of class Friday 12/14 (in the library).
DUE: END OF CLASS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14